

# USAID | OTI | CREA | CCSSP

## CREA | Costa Rica



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

### **Cuban Civil Society Support Program (CCSSP)**

Contract Number DOT-I-00-03-00009-00

#### **Monthly Report**

**June 2011**

*Submitted July 5, 2011*

## 1. Country Situation Update

### Economic Reforms

The Government of Cuba, with the Council of Ministers' approval, recently implemented several measures creating more flexible regulations to stimulate growth of the private sector. These new measures are in addition to the economic reforms announced earlier this year. The implementation period for these approved changes began in May and will continue through July. *Granma* newspaper reported over 300,000 Cubans have entered the private sector since last October; however, indicators show there is growing impatience and discomfort among new workers, creating pressure for legislation to move forward.

The recent reforms, supplementing those already in the implementation process, will incentivize economic growth across sectors. They will include an increase of allowable privately employed workers, an increase in allowable customers at private businesses, and additional authorized trade areas for the newly hired workforce. The reforms also propose guidelines for emerging businesses, including auditable financial reports, health and sanitation regulations, allowance of publicity and marketing campaigns, and the creation of a wholesale market accessible for citizens. The new measures will also implement tax reductions, which will address one of the largest complaints from the Cuban citizens.

These economic reforms mark the first time since the Revolution that the government has acted to implement various permanent measures. This process is different from the Special Period in the nineties when the failing economy caused the Cuban government to authorize private business licenses, which were later revoked upon economic improvement with assistance from Venezuela. In current circumstances, it is unlikely Cuba will receive any assistance from its Latin American ally since President Hugo Chavez's popularity is diminishing as Venezuela faces serious economic problems.

### USAID Cuba Programming

A group of legislators, led by Senator John Kerry, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, requested a revision of the USAID Cuba programs in April. This move delayed the \$20 million in funds waiting for approval in Congress. The group voiced concerns that USAID Cuba programs lack transparency and have not achieved their objectives. Congressional staff has inquired regarding programmatic activities and the steps USAID has taken to ensure the future safety of development workers and to maintain operational security.

In response, the State Department acknowledged the difficulties and risk involved, but asserted the programs were effective. The State Department stated democracy programs "have been instrumental in raising the international profile of civil society activists." On June 25th, USAID announced it will move forward with Cuba programs, worth \$21 million, despite the current hold. The three RFAs issued by USAID to support civil society, free flow of information and youth expression, all emphasize improved evaluation of impact. Even so, the \$21 million has not yet been approved by Congress; the \$20 million that remains on hold is a part of \$40 million for Cuba democracy programs previously approved by the full Congress in 2008.



## 2. Programmatic Highlights and Major Activities

### *Programmatic Activities:*

### *Key Programmatic Accomplishments:*

- **Sector CP** - *This innovative sector seeks to counter apathy and stimulate civic engagement by supporting media projects that communicate positive, unbiased messages through different aspects of everyday life and humor. In previous activities under this sector, the CCSSP created a variety of media products and was able to shape the social content of the items produced to promote civic analysis and a sense of duty for the targeted audience.*
  - [SJO074]: The final product will be presented to grantee the first week of July. A specialized company has been hired by the grantee to develop focus groups in a third country. These sessions are scheduled for the first week of July, following the completion and approval of the final product. The final results will be delivered to OTI/CREA in the second week of July.
  - [SJO076]: The grantee has finalized the details of the product, presented the first draft to OTI/CREA, and started the final stage of production. The grantee is in the process of testing a distribution strategy, using various platforms to reach out to networks. The distribution platform is ready and the first test was publicly launched and ready to begin distribution next month.
  - [SJO079]: The second set of products of this phase was completed and the grantee is in the process of distribution through an online platform to reach a larger network. According to the indicators collected, the distribution strategy has been successful and continues to increase the targeted audience. Next month, the grantee will launch and distribute a fourth product. OTI/CREA is planning strategic discussions with the grantee regarding the sustainability of the project after the program's completion.
  - [SJO083]: The final version of the product was delivered. Following strategic conversations between the grantee and local organizations, the grantee traveled to the island to present the product and perform a workshop with the targeted audience. The beneficiary accepted the product and the grantee was able to engage local contacts to continue distribution. The grantee returned from the island successfully. A strategic meeting will occur next month to continue developing strategies for distribution through the local partner.
  - [SJO084]: The targeted audience accepted the platform created and launched under grant SJO068 and that is in operation under SJO084. Assessments have been conducted to ensure a functional communications component and the ability to reach the targeted audience. Next month, the grantee will launch a marketing campaign for product distribution across the island. The second component of this grant is in process and the product's first draft will be presented next month.
  - [SJO092]: This grant, a follow-on to SJO074, will provide resources to complete two new products. The contracted company presented two complete strategies to the grantee and the production of the first product is in process. The grantee is creating a distribution strategy for the final product.
- **Sector CP (2)** - *This sector has exponentially exceeded expectations, and has demonstrated a true desire for freedom of expression and a need for increased networking capacity on the island.*

*Therefore, the CCSSP has allocated significant resources toward achieving further success in this sector.*

- [SJO077]: Grantee has completed activities under this grant and delivered the final reporting documents and financial reports to OTI/CREA. These reports are currently under review for grant close out.
- [SJO087]: OTI/CREA has received the final deliverables from grantee. The deliverable will provide access to the initiative's platform through the life of the project. OTI/CREA is in the process of reviewing and will close grant upon acceptance.
- [SJO093]: OTI/CREA cleared a new grant as follow-on to grant SJO087; Grantee is in the process of preparing the final deliverable to provide complete access to the initiative's platform through the life of the project.
- [SJO094]: This grant is a follow-on to SJO077 and will continue the initiative until the end of the program. OTI/CREA cleared the grant and the agreement is currently in process to be signed by the grantee.
- **Sector US** – *In this sector, CCSSP explored the reality of this population group and discovered significant potential for civic initiatives. With Latin American NGOs whose experience and characteristics are similar to the target population, civic activities are conducted to influence independent action.*
  - [SJO075]: The grantee developed a training platform to provide communication and guidance to the beneficiary network. The grantee traveled to the island to ensure successful creation of a network through a series of activities across the island. The grantee will gather documented evidence that the beneficiaries are capable of conducting activities and creating a network.
- **Other Activities**
  - [SJO078]: In recent communications, the beneficiary confirmed all activities have been successfully developed. A second cash disbursement was successfully sent to the beneficiaries with a consultant. The consultant will collect and submit detailed reports and documentation to OTI/CREA.
  - [SJO082]: Grantee travel to the island has been postponed due to delays in obtaining visas. This has affected the project implementation schedule. To ensure project completion and the grantee meets all objectives within the agreed upon timeframe, a new grant has been signed to enhance the implementation team with additional personnel.
  - [SJO085]: Cash Disbursement 1 has been successfully delivered. The beneficiaries have begun implementation of planned activities. Due to administrative and security reasons, the grant's budget was reduced.
  - [SJO088]: The grantee successfully transitioned to a new intermediary organization to conduct the planned activities. All proper documentation was presented to the local authorities to request permits for the beneficiaries. The grantee is in the process of recruiting activity facilitators and creating a work plan tailored to the beneficiaries needs.
  - [SJO089]: This new grant was signed as a follow-on to grant SJO086. The grantee has been in close contact with partners and several meeting have taken place to establish the necessary alliances to implement activities. Milestone 1 has been completed and paid.



- [SJO090]: This grant was signed to provide the grantee with additional resources to cover the delays experienced in grant SJO082. The grant will add new members to the team, maximizing capacity on the ground to achieve the expected outcomes. The grantee will travel when official visas are granted.
- [SJO091]: Through this grant OTI/CREA will support monitoring and evaluation of activities completed under grant SJO082 and SJO090. The results will be reported directly to OTI/CREA.

**Program Operations**

- Grants cleared to date: **92** (16 in process, 8 completed, 58 closed, 4 cancelled, 5 rejected after clearance)

Pending	Status Count			
	Cleared	Completed	Closed	Cancelled / Rejected
1	17	8	58	4 / 10* <i>*5 had been cleared</i>

# USAID | OTI | CREA | CCSSP

CLEARED		
1	SJO074	\$38,917.00
2	SJO075	\$69,655.00
3	SJO076	\$79,435.00
4	SJO078	\$39,660.00
5	SJO079	\$51,560.00
6	SJO082	\$185,409.00
7	SJO083	\$32,390.00
8	SJO084	\$91,254.00
9	SJO085	\$46,293.00
10	SJO087	\$90,000.00
11	SJO088	\$47,801.00
12	SJO089	\$25,328.00
13	SJO090	\$39,710.00
14	SJO091	\$18,305.00
15	SJO092	\$71,066.00
16	SJO093	\$90,000.00
17	SJO094	\$122,014.00
<b>Subtotal:</b>		<b>\$1,138,797.00</b>

COMPLETED		
1	SJO061	\$26,671.00
2	SJO068	\$75,665.00
3	SJO070	\$28,325.00
4	SJO072	\$231,558.00
5	SJO077	\$174,196.00
6	SJO080	\$5,766.00
7	SJO081	\$11,540.00
8	SJO086	\$13,657.00
<b>Subtotal:</b>		<b>\$520,008.00</b>

CLOSED		
1	SJO001	\$95,420.00
2	SJO003	\$17,157.00
3	SJO006	\$81,421.00
4	SJO007	\$123,098.00
5	SJO008	\$34,332.00
6	SJO009	\$24,256.00
7	SJO010	\$30,359.00

CLOSED		
8	SJO011	\$19,601.00
9	SJO012	\$14,204.00
10	SJO014	\$47,453.00
11	SJO015	\$7,328.00
12	SJO016	\$72,709.00
13	SJO017	\$2,345.00
14	SJO018	\$12,759.00
15	SJO019	\$89,059.00
16	SJO020	\$11,430.00
17	SJO022	\$72,098.00
18	SJO024	\$12,784.00
19	SJO025	\$86,994.00
20	SJO026	\$4,655.00
21	SJO027	\$4,743.00
22	SJO028	\$63,655.00
23	SJO029	\$57,625.00
24	SJO030	\$17,830.00
25	SJO031	\$5,876.00
26	SJO032	\$78,792.00
27	SJO033	\$74,390.00
28	SJO034	\$65,522.00
29	SJO035	\$19,429.00
30	SJO036	\$14,525.00
31	SJO037	\$36,210.00
32	SJO038	\$99,163.00
33	SJO039	\$38,510.00
34	SJO040	\$141,427.00
35	SJO041	\$4,947.00
36	SJO042	\$21,551.00
37	SJO044	\$86,900.00
38	SJO046	\$21,940.00
39	SJO047	\$29,152.00
40	SJO048	\$4,542.00
41	SJO049	\$89,900.00
42	SJO050	\$129,050.00
43	SJO052	\$53,161.00
44	SJO053	\$12,248.00
45	SJO054	\$30,309.00
46	SJO055	\$55,503.00

CLOSED		
47	SJO056	\$69,091.00
48	SJO057	\$4,514.00
49	SJO058	\$125,571.00
50	SJO062	\$54,802.00
51	SJO063	\$8,819.00
52	SJO064	\$4,284.00
53	SJO065	\$25,886.00
54	SJO066	\$17,316.00
55	SJO067	\$86,732.00
56	SJO069	\$19,149.00
57	SJO071	\$55,674.00
58	SJO073	\$24,155.00
<b>Subtotal:</b>		<b>\$2,612,355.00</b>

PENDING		
1	ijcSJO050	
<b>Subtotal:</b>		

CANCELLED		
1	SJO013	\$9,825.00
2	SJO043	\$5,687.00
3	SJO045	\$16,707.00
4	SJO059	\$3,325.00
<b>Subtotal:</b>		<b>\$35,544.00</b>

REJECTED		
1	iSJO001	
2	iSJO010	
3	iSJO011	
4	<b>SJO002</b>	Rejected After Clearance
5	<b>SJO004</b>	
6	<b>SJO005</b>	
7	<b>SJO021</b>	
8	<b>SJO023</b>	Never Approved
9	SJO051	
10	SJO060	

### **Administration and Operations**

- Activity Database (ADa): CREA staff continues to update the Activity Database with information from the field.
- Procurement: CREA staff continues with procurement to provide in-kind support to grantees activities.
- Finance: All financial transactions continue to be managed from Washington, D.C.
- Human Resources: There have been no changes in under Human Resources.
- Close Out: CREA staff continues to follow the close out processes outlined in the CCSSP Close Out Plan, which was submitted to OTI on March 31, 2011. All grants are scheduled to close by July 31, 2011 allowing for time to complete all administrative and operational duties for Program close on September 30, 2011.

### **3. Budget Information**

CLIN	Description	Total	Obligated	Disbursed May 2011	Cumulative Amount
001	Operations	\$ 4,887,599		\$ 70,056	\$ 4,156,202
002	Fixed Fee Operations	\$ 244,380		\$ 3,502	\$ 207,810
003	Grants	\$ 10,200,000		\$ 192,520	\$ 3,450,328
004	Fixed Fee on Grants	\$ 204,000		\$ 3,850	\$ 69,006
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 15,535,979</b>	<b>\$ 9,170,671</b>	<b>\$ 269,930.30</b>	<b>\$ 7,883,348.05</b>

### **4. Problems Encountered: Issues and Proposed Actions**

- There are no issues or problems to report in this period.

### **5. Upcoming Activities**

CREA has the following activities planned for July 2011:

- Consultants under grants SJO082, SJO090, and SJO091, will travel to the island upon receiving visas to carry out activities with beneficiaries.
- Beneficiaries under SJO088 will travel from the island to a third country for training sessions, if visas are granted.
- Focus groups will be held in a third country under SJO074 and SJO076 to collect reactions of the targeted audience to provide information for the distribution process.
- Under SJO079, a meeting will take place in a third country to establish a sustainability plan for the initiative.
- A strategy session will be held under SJO084 at the beginning of the month.